

Memorandum



Date: February 08, 2005

CEER

Agenda Item No. 4 (I)

To: Honorable Chairperson Joe A. Martinez
And Members Board of County Commissioners

From: George M. Burgess
County Manager

Subject: Resolution Declaring Certain Geographic Areas of the City of Miami to be a Slum and Blighted Area. And Finding of Need for Creation of a Community Redevelopment Agency

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), approve the accompanying resolution, declaring a certain geographic area of the City of Miami, Florida generally described as bounded by NE 36th Street on the north, NE 2nd Avenue on the east, NE 29th Street on the south and North Miami Avenue on the west to be a slum and blighted area, pursuant to Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes. Such area is referred to as the "Midtown Miami Redevelopment Area" (the "Redevelopment Area").

It is also recommended that the BCC delegate certain redevelopment powers to the City of Miami, so that the City may take the appropriate measures to create a Community Redevelopment Agency for the sole purpose of preparing a Redevelopment Plan.

BACKGROUND

In 1969, the Florida Legislature enacted the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969, as it is presently contained in Part III, Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, as amended (the "Act"). The Act authorized counties and municipalities in the State of Florida to create community redevelopment agencies and to prepare community redevelopment plans, with which community redevelopment projects may be undertaken to eliminate and prevent the development and spread of slum or blighted areas, through the use of creative financing mechanisms.

In order to implement the Act, the County must adopt a resolution finding that:

1. An area within the municipal boundaries of the City to be a "slum or blighted area", and
2. That rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or a combination thereof, of the Redevelopment Area is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals or welfare of the residents of the County.

The City of Miami Commission recently adopted a resolution authorizing the City Manager to conduct a "Finding of Necessity Study" for the creation of a Community Redevelopment Agency.

On April 27, 2004 the BCC approved Resolution R-496-04, authorizing an interlocal agreement between the County, the City and the Midtown Miami Community Development District (CDD). The agreement provided for Economic Development Payments (EIP) to further the development of the proposed redevelopment area by securing financial contributions to the CDD from the City and the County to defray the cost of parking infrastructure and a public plaza. The interlocal agreement stated that the City and the County desire to establish a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and trust fund, prior to June 30, 2005, in order to use such agency's tax increment financing revenues to replace the obligation of the two parties' EIP payments.

A Finding of Necessity (FON) Report (Exhibit "A") examined the conditions in the proposed Redevelopment Area and concluded that blight, as defined in the Act exists based on the following factors:

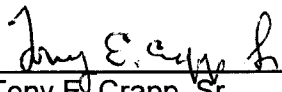
1. Predominance of defective or inadequate street layouts, transportation and parking facilities
2. Unsanitary and unsafe conditions

The Miami-Dade County Tax Increment Financing and Coordinating Committee (TIFCC) have reviewed the report and support its conclusions.

The City cannot proceed with the redevelopment of the proposed Redevelopment Area unless the Board delegates certain redevelopment powers to the City. At its request and in order to assist the City in its redevelopment efforts, it is recommended that the City be delegated the power to declare the need for and create a Community Redevelopment Agency for the sole purpose of preparing and adopting a Redevelopment Plan subject to the subsequent review and approval of the City's Planning Advisory Board and the BCC.

All powers not specifically delegated to the City are reserved exclusively for the Board. Any delegations of additional powers beyond the preparation of the Community Redevelopment Plan will be determined through the review of the redevelopment plan and further action by the BCC in considering implementation of community redevelopment activities.

Approval by the Board of the Midtown Miami Community Redevelopment Area and the creation of a Community Redevelopment Agency with certain redevelopment powers does not necessarily lead to the establishment of the Tax Increment Financing District. A viable redevelopment plan is a prerequisite for such action.



Tony E. Crapp, Sr.
Assistant County Manager




MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

TO: Honorable Chairman Joe A. Martinez
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: March 1, 2005

FROM: 
Robert A. Ginsburg
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Agenda Item No.

Please note any items checked.

- ☐ "4-Day Rule" ("3-Day Rule" for committees) applicable if raised
- ☐ 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- ☐ 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- ☐ Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- ☐ Budget required
- ☐ Statement of fiscal impact required
- ☐ Bid waiver requiring County Manager's written recommendation
- ☐ Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Manager's report for public hearing
- ☐ Housekeeping item (no policy decision required)
- ☐ No committee review

Approved _____ Mayor

Agenda Item No.

Veto _____

Override _____

RESOLUTION NO.

RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF CITY MIAMI, FLORIDA DESCRIBED IN MORE DETAIL IN THIS RESOLUTION TO BE A SLUM OR BLIGHTED AREA; DECLARING THE REBUILDING, REHABILITATION, CONSERVATION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA TO BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, MORALS AND WELFARE OF RESIDENTS OF CITY OF MIAMI AND OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA; FINDING NEED FOR CREATION OF COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY; AND DELEGATING CERTAIN COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT POWERS TO THE CITY OF MIAMI

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature enacted the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969 during its 1969 Legislative Session, which enactment is presently codified in the Florida Statutes as Part III of Chapter 163, Sections 163.330 through 163.450, as amended, ("Act"); and

WHEREAS, all powers arising pursuant to the Act are conferred upon counties with Home Rule charters, which counties in turn are authorized to delegate certain such powers to municipalities within their boundaries; and

WHEREAS, such authorization for counties to delegate such powers to municipalities is contained in Section 163.410 of the Act, which provides that in home rule counties, the powers conferred by the Act shall be exercised exclusively by the governing body of such county, provided, however, the governing may, in its discretion, by resolution, delegate certain of those powers to a municipality; and

WHEREAS, the City Commission of the City of Miami (the "City") adopted a resolution which, among other things, authorized the City Manager to prepare a Finding of Necessity Study to establish whether a need for the rehabilitation, conservation or redevelopment, or a combination of each exists in such area; and

WHEREAS, the Board considered the "Findings of Necessity" Report attached as Exhibit A (the "Report"), concerning the existence of slum or blighted areas within the boundaries of the area designated by the City and identified in such Report; and

WHEREAS, the Board concurs with the Report and finds that one or more slum or blighted areas, as defined in Section 163.340 of the Act exist within the area of the City identified in the Report; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that rebuilding, rehabilitation, conservation, and/or redevelopment of said slum or blighted area is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the residents of the City and of Miami-Dade County; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that said slum or blighted area is appropriate for redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that there is a need for a community redevelopment agency within the City to carry out the community redevelopment purposes of the Act; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to delegate certain community redevelopment powers to the City pursuant to the Act,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, THAT:

Section 1. The foregoing recitations are incorporated as a part of this resolution by reference.

Section 2. Based on findings of the Report, a blighted or slum area exists in an area of the City generally described as bounded by NE 36th Street on the north, NE 2nd Avenue on the east, NE 29th Street on the south, and North Miami Avenue on the west, which is referred to as the "Mid-Town Miami Redevelopment Area".

Section 3. The rebuilding, rehabilitation, conservation and redevelopment of the Mid-Town Miami Redevelopment Area is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the residents of the City and of Miami-Dade County as a whole, said finding of necessity being made within the meaning of the Act.

Section 4. The Mid-Town Miami Redevelopment Area is found and declared to be a slum or blighted area as defined in Section 163.340 of the Act as applied to Miami-Dade County.

Section 5. There is a need for a community redevelopment agency ("CRA") to function in the City to carry out the community redevelopment purposes of the Act.

Section 6. The Board delegates the community redevelopment power to the City to create a CRA pursuant to the Act with the sole power initially to prepare and adopt a plan of redevelopment for the Mid-Town Miami Redevelopment Area, to submit it to the City's Planning Advisory Board for review as required the Act and upon the completion of such review, to submit it to this Board for approval after notice and public hearing.

Section 7. The Board shall consider the delegation of additional community redevelopment powers to the CRA in the form of an interlocal agreement by subsequent resolution of this Board.


The foregoing resolution was offered by Commissioner _____, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner _____ and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Joe A. Martinez, Chairman	
Dennis C. Moss, Vice-Chairman	
Bruno A. Barreiro	Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler
Jose "Pepe" Diaz	Carlos A. Gimenez
Sally A. Heyman	Barbara J. Jordan
Dorrin D. Rolle	Natacha Seijas
Katy Sorenson	Rebeca Sosa
Sen. Javier D. Souto	

The Chairperson thereupon declared the resolution duly passed and adopted this 1st day of March, 2005. This resolution shall become effective ten (10) days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency. 

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

City of Miami

Finding of Necessity For Redevelopment Study

FEC Buena Vista Yard Area



Florida International University
Metropolitan Center

Executive Summary

In the past several years, the City of Miami has taken an active role in revitalizing its Florida East Coast (FEC) Railroad corridor north of the Central Business District (CBD). The City has intervened to stem the declining economic and physical conditions of the corridor through a series of planning implementation strategies intended to stimulate private investment activity. Of particular importance is a 56-acre site located within the geographic center of the corridor. The parcel, formerly owned by Florida East Coast Railway, was most recently utilized as an overflow storage yard for containers used in the maritime transportation of goods. Due to its centralized location and the fact that it is the largest remaining tract of developable land within the boundaries of the City of Miami, this property is viewed as a vital cog in this on-going revitalization effort.

In order to encourage development of the site, the Miami City Commission recently adopted a resolution authorizing the City Manager to conduct a "Finding of Necessity Study" for the creation of a Community Redevelopment Agency ("CRA") and to enter into an Interlocal Agreement ("Agreement") between the City of Miami ("City"), Miami Dade County ("County") and Midtown Miami Community Development District ("CDD"), which secures financial contributions to the CDD by the City and the County to defray the cost of parking infrastructure and a public plaza. Commitment to the project is also evident in the Agreement, wherein the City's and the County's desire to create a CRA to support in the revitalization efforts of the site is addressed in detail. The creation of a CRA pursuant to Part III of Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes and the powers authorized by legislation will facilitate the planned redevelopment of the former Buena Vista site and surrounding area by providing a public funding resource to leverage private investment activity.

At the City's request, the Florida International University (FIU) Metropolitan Center has researched the necessary steps for the creation of a CRA. Creation of the agency is initiated by the governing body of a city or county adopting a resolution, supported by data and analysis, finding the existence of one or more slum or blighted areas or a shortage of housing affordable to low or moderate income persons within its jurisdiction. The resolution must also find that the "rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or a combination thereof" of the area is necessary.

For the purposes of the "Finding of Necessity for Redevelopment Study", the geographic area is defined by the public right-of-ways that generally form the outer boundaries of the former FEC Buena Vista Yard. The site is bounded by NE 36th Street on the north; NE 2nd Avenue on the east; NE 29th Street on the south; and, North Miami Avenue on the west. The study area is located 2 miles north of the City of Miami's Central Business District (CBD), 5 miles east of Miami International Airport and 2 miles west of Miami Beach. The site is 1/8 mile west of Biscayne Boulevard (US 1) and immediately south of I-195 and its north and southbound connections to I-95.

The FEC Buena Vista Yard was purchased in December 2002 from FEC Railways by Biscayne Development Partners, LLC., a joint venture between Midtown Equities and Samuel & Company. The new owners subsequently proposed two separate projects on the 56-acre site. The "Midtown Miami" portion is a proposed mixed-use development consisting of 2,800 condominiums, a 150,000 square foot office tower, a 200-room condo-hotel and spa and approximately 119,000 square feet of retail, and restaurants on the ground floors of the office and condo towers. The

second portion, "The Shops at Midtown", consists of national anchor tenants, retail and restaurants. The project proponents, Developers Realty (DDR), are also planning to enter into an agreement with a residential developer to build 700 apartments above the "street of shops."

The "Finding of Necessity" Study's methodology included field surveys of the former FEC Buena Vista Yard and supporting public infrastructure and transportation network, and a review of current planning and economic development studies and reports of the area. The study concluded that the former FEC Buena Vista Yard is an underutilized, physically blighted site that has cast a negative image on this section of the City for many years. In addition, the overall condition of the supporting public infrastructure and transportation network within the surrounding public right-of-ways can be described as deteriorated in accordance with the standards of Section 163.340(8), F.S. Specifically, field surveys determined that the public infrastructure and transportation network in the adjoining right-of-ways is generally decaying, insufficient, poorly designed or non-existent. The street/roadway system in the area is faulty and inadequate and creates unsafe conditions for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. It should be noted that the study determined the presence of two primary factors or conditions that support the findings that the FEC Buena Vista Yard and adjoining right-of-ways meet the standards of a "blighted area" as defined under 163.340(8) F.S. Those factors are: 1) unsanitary and unsafe conditions, and 2) the predominance of defective and inadequate street layouts and roadways. The study further concluded that the conditions of blight that exist, absent intervention, will continue to impact negatively the physical appearance of the area and depress property values.

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I Introduction

A. Study Purpose

The City of Miami has taken an active role in revitalizing its FEC Corridor north of the Central Business District (CBD). The City has intervened to stem the declining economic and physical conditions of the corridor through a series of planning implementation strategies intended to stimulate private investment activity. The former FEC Buena Vista site, a 56-acre tract located in the geographic center of the FEC Corridor study area, is viewed as a vital cog in this revitalization effort.

One planning implementation tool that cities and counties may consider in their revitalization efforts are the powers authorized by legislation through a community redevelopment agency ("CRA") pursuant to Part III of Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes. A CRA would substantially support the planned redevelopment of the former Buena Vista site and surrounding area by providing a public funding resource to leverage private investment activity.

Florida redevelopment activities are initiated by the governing body of a city or county adopting a resolution in accordance with s.163.355 F.S. The initial step in creating a CRA is the preparation of a study supporting a "Finding of Necessity." The accompanying resolution, supported by data and analysis, must make a legislative finding that the conditions in the area meet the criteria described in s. 163.340(7) or (8). Specifically, the resolution must state that:

- 1) One or more slum or blighted areas, or one or more areas in which there is a shortage of housing affordable to residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly, exist in such county or municipality; and
- 2) The rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or a combination thereof, of such area or areas, including, if appropriate, the development of housing which residents of low or moderate income, including the elderly, can afford, is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of such county or municipality.

A "slum area" as defined under s.163.340(7) means an area having physical or economic conditions conducive to disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, poverty, or crime because there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential, which are impaired by reason of dilapidation, deterioration, age or obsolescence, and exhibiting one or more of the following factors:

- a) Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces;
- b) High density of population, compared to the population density of adjacent areas within the county or municipality; and overcrowding, as indicated by government-maintained statistics or other studies and the requirements of the Florida Building Code; or
- c) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes.

A "blighted area" as defined under s.163.340(8) means an area in which there are a substantial number of deteriorated, or deteriorating structures, in which conditions, as indicated by

government-maintained statistics or other studies, are leading to economic distress or endanger life or property, and in which two or more of the following factors are present:

- a) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, parking facilities, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities;
- b) Aggregate assessed values of real property in the area for ad valorem tax purposes have failed to show any appreciable increase over the 5 years prior to the finding of such conditions;
- c) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- d) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- e) Deterioration of site or other improvements;
- f) Inadequate and outdated building density patterns;
- g) Falling lease rates per square foot of office, commercial, or industrial space compared to the remainder of the county or municipality;
- h) Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
- i) Residential and commercial vacancy rates higher in the area than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- j) Incidence of crime in the area higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- k) Fire and emergency medical service calls to the area proportionately higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- l) A greater number of violations of the Florida Building Code in the area than the number of violations recorded in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- m) Diversity of ownership or defective or unusual conditions of title which prevent the free alienability of land within the deteriorated or hazardous area; or
- n) Governmentally owned property with adverse environmental conditions caused by public or private entity.

B. Study Area

The study area is part of the larger FEC Corridor (see Figure 1). For the purposes of the "Finding of Necessity for Redevelopment Study", the geographic area is defined by the public right-of-ways that generally form the outer boundaries of the Buena Vista site (see Figure 2). The site is bounded by NE 36th Street on the north; NE 2nd Avenue on the east; NE 29th Street on the south; and, North Miami Avenue on the west.

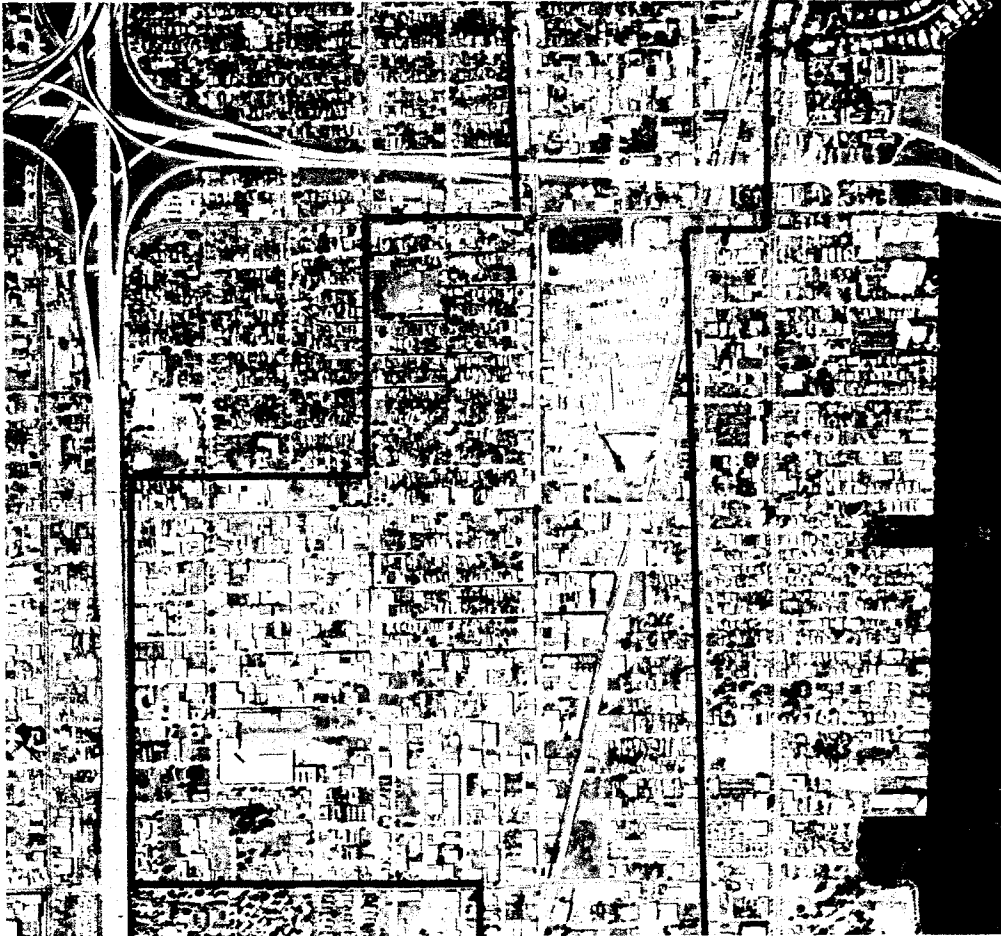


Figure 1. FEC Corridor Study Area

The study area is located 2 miles north of the City of Miami's Central Business District (CBD), 5 miles east of Miami International Airport and 2 miles west of Miami Beach. The site is ¼ mile west of Biscayne Boulevard (US 1) and immediately south of I-195 and its north and southbound connections to I-95.

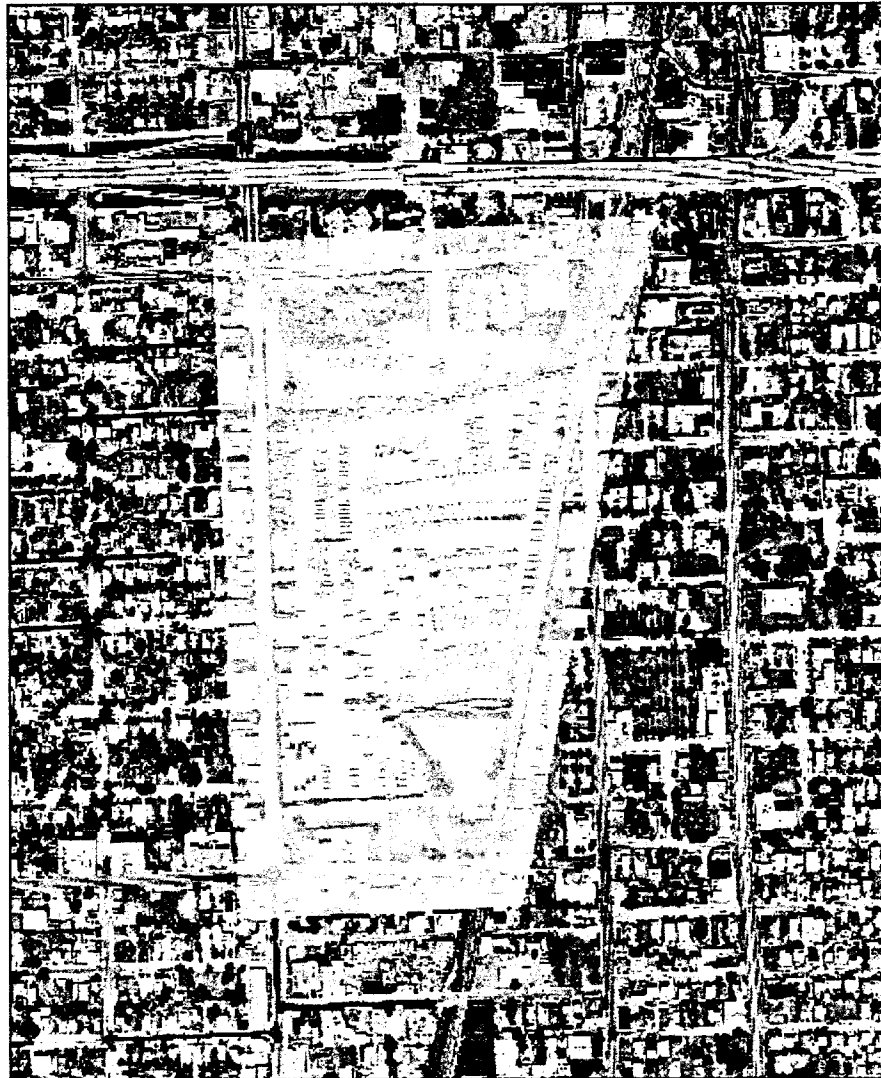


Figure 2. FEC/Buena Vista Yard Study Area

II Urban Redevelopment Context

A. Background

The FEC Corridor was the subject of a redevelopment study initiated in January 2000 by the City of Miami working through a Task Force comprised of government officials, business leaders, community non-profits and the real estate development community. The mission of the Task Force was "to identify and facilitate redevelopment opportunities within the corridor by facilitating private sector investment in underutilized areas; stimulating and safeguarding industrial and commercial uses; ensuring compatible land use buffers; improving transportation accessibility; and, enhancing employment opportunities for city residents as well as the overall impact on the City, all within the context of creating and preserving a livable community." The Task Force released a report on their Findings and Recommendations in September 2000. An implementation work plan was then formulated to focus on specific areas of need and opportunity as identified by the Task Force for the three neighborhood sub-areas of Wynwood, Edgewater and Little Haiti. The City of Miami then selected Florida International University's (FIU) Metropolitan Center to head up a team of urban planners, architects, engineers and GIS experts to develop a comprehensive strategic redevelopment plan that would focus on economic development, transportation, housing, land use and urban design issues and solutions.

The FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan was the product of a one-year community planning process that focused on identifying and facilitating economic revitalization opportunities within the corridor and its surrounding neighborhoods. The intent of the final plan was to build on the existing competitive advantages of the FEC Corridor and to develop clear and workable implementation strategies and action steps to help ensure that the community's vision for the corridor will become a reality.

The plan was shaped by certain "Guiding Principles" that were first articulated in the "Findings and Recommendations Report" of the FEC Task Force then echoed during the subsequent community conversations in Wynwood, Edgewater and Little Haiti.

These strongly interrelated Guiding Principles included:

- 1) The need to create a diverse and sustainable economy
- 2) The vision of an urban-scale, mixed-used redevelopment pattern
- 3) The need for a balanced and integrated transportation system
- 4) The development of a spectrum of housing choice and opportunity

In order to chart a meaningful direction for the redevelopment of the FEC Corridor it was vital that the existing "competitive advantages" of the FEC Corridor be identified and enhanced.

The competitive advantages of the FEC Corridor that were identified included:

- 1) Proximity to Downtown and other employment centers
- 2) Rail access and proximity to major freeways, expressways and arterial circulation system
- 3) Presence of "known" city districts including the Design, Fashion and Arts and Entertainment Districts
- 4) The FEC Buena Vista site as a major redevelopment opportunity

- 5) Significant inventory of industrial and warehouse properties
- 6) Proximity to Biscayne Bay and Miami Beach

The plan recommended specific "redevelopment strategies" to seize the economic opportunities that were identified and by articulating clear and workable redevelopment concepts that could be implemented in a timely manner.

The FEC Corridor Redevelopment strategies included:

1) Premium transit service

The plan recommends the development of a premium transit system utilizing the existing spine of the FEC Corridor and its right-of-way. The transportation strategy is predicated on the vision that the FEC Buena Vista site will be redeveloped into a high density, transit oriented, urban "mid-town" center and that the larger corridor, distinguished by the Design and Arts and Entertainment Districts and Little Haiti, will become growing magnets for business, entertainment and tourism.

The transit strategy recommends both "near term" and "long term" light rail alternatives. The near term strategy entails an electric trolley that would operate in mixed traffic and provide service from 79th Street south to the Government Center. Alternatives have been proposed that would include utilization of the FEC right-of-way in combination with NE 2nd Avenue. The long-term alternatives involve the same alignment, but would include provisions for a trolley line that would operate on its own exclusive right-of-way.

2) FEC Buena Vista Mixed-Use District

The redevelopment concept for the FEC Buena Vista site was to extend the existing grid street system located north of NE 36th Street and west of North Miami Avenue through the entire site creating a pedestrian oriented street pattern that would facilitate a vibrant, mixed-use district consisting of a combination of commercial, residential and light manufacturing loft space with accommodations for an urban design treatment of big box retail development.

3) Arts and Entertainment District

The proposed Arts and Entertainment District concept combined the economic energy and redevelopment potential of the performing Arts Center with broader opportunities within Omni/Park West and nearby Overtown. The proposed concept is to create an enhanced retail and a mixed-use corridor between NE 14th and 15th Streets that clusters various arts and entertainment uses. The redevelopment concept envisions a late night entertainment district that revitalizes the area and provides economic support to the future Performing Arts Center.

4) Little Haiti Commercial Corridor

The proposed Little Haiti Commercial Corridor concept was to create an authentic mixed-use neighborhood incorporating retail development, light manufacturing, housing and active recreation within the context of the existing Haitian community. The focus of redevelopment activity would be NE 2nd Avenue between NW 58th and 62nd Streets.

5) 79th Street Business and Greenway Corridor

The proposed 79th Street Business and Greenway Corridor concept consists of three elements 1) a commercial façade renovation program targeting retail blocks that are in general disrepair and visually detracting to the 79th Street commercial corridor, 2) streetscape improvements along 79th Street and the entrance to 4th Court, and 3) open space and greenway development along the Little River and FEC right-of-way.

6) 25th Street Conservation District

The proposed 25th Street Conservation District concept envisions the creation of a conservation district, by zoning amendment, for the full length of NE 25th Street to preserve the historical and architectural integrity of the existing structures in the area. The concept also recommends general streetscape improvements including repaving of streets and sidewalks, new curbs, crosswalks, street plantings, lighting and street furniture. The concept includes a pocket park at the end of 25th Street at Biscayne Bay that would serve as an end destination for community residents wishing to walk or bicycle to the Bay.

In addition to the redevelopment concepts outlined above, the FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan recommended specific "Implementation Strategies" and "Action Steps" for the four (3) substantive elements of the plan - transportation, economic development, housing and streetscapes. The Implementation Strategies described the redevelopment need and concept, while the Action Steps provided the course or charge for city officials to help ensure timely and effective plan implementation.

1) Transportation

In addition to the "near term" and "long term" premium transit service discussed above, the overall transportation strategy also included a series of roadway improvements to address existing conditions and to mitigate against anticipated redevelopment activity. Roadway improvements including widening and realignments are recommended for 36th, 29th, and 34th Streets in anticipation of the high-density redevelopment of the FEC Buena Vista site. The reconfiguration of key intersections including NE 2nd Avenue and 29th and 36th Streets is also recommended. North Miami Avenue is envisioned as a four lane minor arterial to handle projected traffic volumes. The plan also recommends that an engineering study be undertaken by FDOT for an Interstate 95 and NW 29th Street interchange to mitigate both existing and anticipated traffic volumes in the Wynwood neighborhood.

2) Economic Development

The plan recommends five Economic Development Implementation Strategies and their accompanying action steps. The Implementation Strategies include:

- A. That funding priority be given to the proposed Redevelopment Concepts for the FEC Buena Vista Mixed-Use District, the Arts and Entertainment District and Little Haiti Commercial Corridor.
- B. That the City embark on a manufacturing retention and expansion strategy that would include economic incentives, public

infrastructure improvements and the creation of a manufacturing district

- C. That the City support an integrated transportation system to maximize the economic potential of the FEC Corridor
- D. That the City support the expansion of the retail sector to improve and diversify the economic base of the FEC Corridor
- E. That the City develop a Marketing Plan for the FEC Corridor that coordinates and integrates existing marketing efforts and promotes the strategies of the redevelopment plan

3) Housing

The plan recommends five Housing Implementation Strategies and their accompanying action steps. The Implementation Strategies include:

- A. Using the proposed zoning changes as a "planning tool" for housing choice
- B. Removing existing barriers to infill housing development and housing rehabilitation
- C. Targeting existing community development and housing resources to the FEC Corridor including the development of a Model Block program
- D. Creating new housing financing mechanisms
- E. Sponsoring an Affordable Urban Housing Design Competition

4) Streetscapes

The plan recommends five Streetscapes Implementation Strategies and their accompanying action steps. The Implementation Strategies include:

- A. Creation of a FEC right-of-way Linear Greenway extending from 79th Street south through the entire study area.
- B. Utilization of the proposed FEC Buena Vista Mixed-Use grid as a prototype throughout the FEC Corridor area
- C. Creation of highly visual and functional east/west roadway connectors
- D. Creation of community "gateways" in Little Haiti
- E. Creation of pedestrian-oriented improvements on Biscayne Boulevard including a planted median between NE14th and NE 36th Streets

The vision of the FEC Corridor as a diverse and connected mixed-use urban environment also required zoning changes that mirrored the "Guiding Principles" of the overall plan and the specific redevelopment strategies proposed therein. An assessment of the FEC Corridor's zoning concluded there was a general absence of the zoning tools necessary for the level and quality of mixed-use set forth in the Guiding Principles. The plan's zoning recommendations include the creation of new Special Districts (SDs) and a Neighborhood Conservation District to facilitate and guide redevelopment within the FEC Corridor.

B. Miami Midtown/Shops at Midtown Project

The FEC Buena Vista site was purchased in December 2002 from FEC Railways by Biscayne Development Partners, LLC., a joint venture between Midtown Equities and Samuel & Company. The new owners subsequently proposed two separate projects on the 56-acre site. The "Midtown

Miami" portion is a proposed mixed-use development consisting of 2,800 condominiums, a 150,000 square foot office tower, a 200-room condo-hotel and spa and approximately 119,000 square feet of retail, and restaurants on the ground floors of the office and condo towers. The second portion, "The Shops at Midtown", consists of national anchor tenants, retail and restaurants. The project proponents, Developers Realty (DDR) are also planning to enter into an agreement with a residential developer to build 700 apartments above the "street of shops."

C. Land use and Zoning

In 2003 the City of Miami amended its Comprehensive Plan and the text of the Future Land Use Element to designate a significant portion of the Buena Vista site as a Chapter 380 Regional Activity Center (RAC). According to the amendment, the Comprehensive Plan designation:

- a) will encourage urban redevelopment in the FEC Corridor, an Urban Infill and Redevelopment Area;
- b) will permit higher development thresholds and promote prompt review of redevelopment plans to facilitate redevelopment;
- c) will be in conjunction with a review by the City of existing zoning regulations that will be designed to promote redevelopment and a mix of new uses appropriate for redevelopment;
- d) will facilitate mixed use development, encourage mass transit, reduce the need for automobile travel;
- e) will permit regional retail development which will create jobs for the surrounding area;
- f) will apply to the FEC Buena Vista Yard which will in land area exceed 20 acres;
- g) will apply to the FEC Buena Vista Yard, which is proximate to interstate and major arterial roadways and is suitable for the development of premium transit.

Consistent with the FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan and Chapter 380 Regional Activity Center designation, the City of Miami re-zoned the Buena Vista site from the existing Industrial and Commercial zoning classifications (see Figure 3) to a new FEC Corridor Overlay Sub-District, Special District (SD) 27.2, entitled Buena Vista Yard West. The Buena Vista Yard West District regulations are intended to provide a method to allow for planning initiatives that achieve a unique or innovative development that is not otherwise provided for in the City's zoning ordinance. The district is deemed to have special and substantial public interest given its proximity to Downtown Miami and the Omni Area, the Design District, Miami Beach, the Wynwood Neighborhood and to future proposed transit facilities within the FEC Corridor. The intent of the District is to: 1) promote the creation of a Miami midtown environment through intensive urban retail mixed-use development with a twenty-four hour activity pattern; and 2) enhance the pedestrian environment and connectivity of the existing surrounding areas by extending the city street grid through the District. The District promotes streetscapes and mixed-use buildings designed to provide pedestrians with lively, interesting, well-designed and highly usable public spaces with a maximum interrelationship with ground floor building uses.

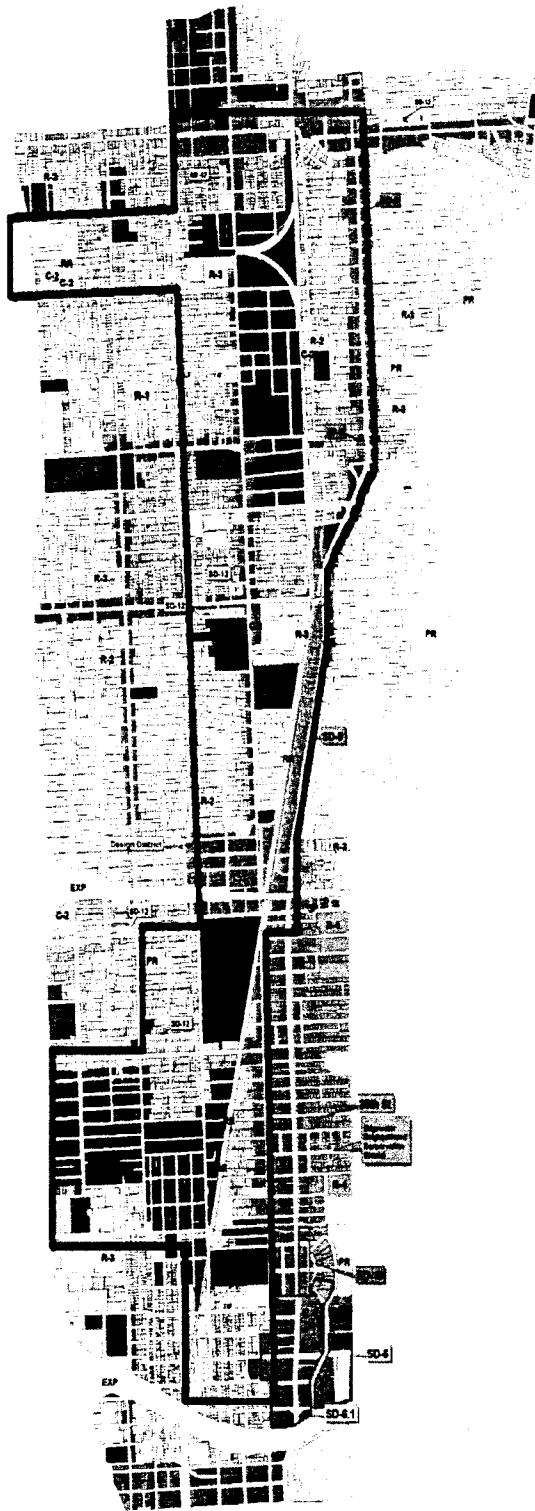


Figure 3. Existing Zoning Districts

Existing Zoning

- C-1 (restricted commercial)
- C-2 (liberal commercial)
- CBD (central business district)
- EXP (expressway)
- G/I (government/institutional)
- I (industrial)
- O (office)
- PR (parks/recreation)
- R-1 (single family)
- R-2 (duplex)
- R-3 (multifamily low density)
- R-4 (multifamily high density)
- RR (railroad)

III Demographic and Economic Analysis

A. Population Characteristics

According to the U.S. Census, the City of Miami's population increased from 358,548 to 362,470 between 1990 and 2000 representing a 1 percent increase. During the same time period, Miami-Dade County's population grew by 16 percent. Between 1990 and 2000 both the City of Miami (3 percent) and Miami Dade County (8 percent) experienced increases in the total number of households.

The Buena Vista study area is located within the Wynwood neighborhood of the City of Miami. Since 1990, Wynwood has experienced a decrease in both its population and households see Table 1 below.

Table 1. Population and Households: Wynwood, City of Miami, and Miami-Dade County

	Population		Households	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Wynwood	4,487	4,175	1,389	1,358
City of Miami	358,548	362,470	130,252	134,250
Miami-Dade County	1,937,094	2,253,362	692,355	776,774

Source: 2000 US Census

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the median household income for Miami-Dade County is \$35,966 compared to \$23,483 for the City of Miami. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, approximately 27 percent of the City of Miami's population is categorized below the poverty rate. In Wynwood, the median household income is substantially less than the City of Miami. The median household income in Wynwood is \$14,794 with household income distributions significantly below the City and Miami-Dade County (see Table 2 below)

Table 2. 2000 Household Income Distribution

	\$0-\$9.9k	\$10k-\$24.9k	\$25k-\$49.9k	\$50k-\$74.9k	\$75k+
Wynwood Total	31.6%	38.3%	22.7%	5.3%	2.0%
City of Miami	26.7%	28.4%	24.2%	11.5%	9.4%
Miami-Dade County	19.2%	27.3%	30.8%	13.0%	9.6%

Source: 2000 US Census

The average poverty level within the general vicinity of the Buena Vista study area was 26.4 percent, almost equivalent to that of the City. However, Wynwood's poverty level is 31.6 which exceeds both the City and the general study area of the FEC Corridor.

The location and level of poverty varies among the different census tracts that comprise the FEC Corridor. For example, Wynwood (census tracts 26, 28, and 31) is characterized as a low-income area with an average of 54 percent of its households below the poverty line. Wynwood is burdened with the highest level of households below poverty and low-income. Figure 8 below illustrates the income level and the poverty status of census tracts comprising the FEC Corridor study area.

Table 3: Income Level and Poverty Level Extraction by Census Tracts for Wynwood, Edgewater, and Little Haiti

Neighborhood	Census Tract	Income Level	# HH Below the Poverty Line	% HH Below the Poverty Line	Median Age of Housing Stock
E to Bay	13.01	Moderate	626	26.99	26
E to Bay	13.02	Moderate	790	28.99	30
Little Haiti	14.01	Moderate	729	46.77	32
Little Haiti	14.02	Low	538	32.17	27
Little Haiti	20.01	Low	702	46.48	24
Little Haiti	20.03	Low	632	39.90	15
Little Haiti	20.04	Low	542	36.84	26
E to Bay	21.00	Middle	229	18.84	33
Little Haiti	22.01	Low	540	43.13	33
Little Haiti	22.02	Low	1,017	58.43	34
Wynwood	26.00	Low	649	47.82	30
E to Bay	27.01	Moderate	1,114	25.50	20
Edgewater	27.02	Low	279	46.06	35
Wynwood	28.00	Low	218	57.57	33
Wynwood	31.00	Low	805	57.24	19

Source: 2000 US Census

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 74 percent of Wynwood's population 25 years and older do not have a high school diploma. This compares to 47 percent for the City of Miami. The typical family has 2-4 members (73 percent of all families), which is comparable to the City. However, 20 percent of Wynwood's households are female headed with children 18 and under compared to 9 percent in the City. The population 65 years and older is only 1 percent in Wynwood compared to 17 percent for the City of Miami as a whole.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the City of Miami's Hispanic population is 65.8 percent (238,351 persons) of the total population, an increase of 3.3 percent since 1990. Miami-Dade's total Hispanic population is 1,291,737 or 57 percent of the County's total population. The City of Miami's Black/African-American population is 22.3 percent (80,858) of the total population, a 5.1 percent decrease since 1990. Miami-Dade's Black/African-American population is 457,214 or 20.3 percent of the County's total population.

Within the City of Miami there are significant concentrations of racial minorities that exceed both the City and County overall percentages. These areas include Wynwood and Little Haiti, neighborhoods that

surround the FEC Buena Vista Yard study area. Wynwood has one of the highest concentrations of Hispanics (72 percent), while Little Haiti has one of the largest concentrations of Blacks (68 percent).

Table 4. Concentrations of Racial Minorities (2000)

	City of Miami	Edison/ Little Haiti	Wynwood
Total Population	362,470	30,905	4,175
<i>Not Hispanic or Latino:</i>	<i>124,119</i>	<i>26,069</i>	<i>1,160</i>
White alone	42,897	1,575	177
Black or African American alone	72,190	20,878	906
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	291	35	6
Asian alone	2,181	137	17
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	70	12	-
Some other race alone	388	75	1
Two or more races	6,102	3,357	53
<i>Hispanic or Latino:</i>	<i>238,351</i>	<i>4,836</i>	<i>3,015</i>
White alone	198,573	3,054	2,152
Black or African American alone	8,668	644	257
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	519	37	11

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

B. Housing Characteristics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are 148,388 housing units in the City of Miami, an increase of 3,838 housing units (3 percent) since 1990. Miami-Dade County increased from 771,288 to 852,278 housing units (11 percent) during the same time period. Approximately 35% of the City's housing stock is owner-occupied and 65% renter-occupied. The owner occupancy rate is nearly 24% less than Miami-Dade County. The City's overall residential vacancy rate is 9.6%, which is 0.7% greater than the County.

The City of Miami's total housing inventory is nearly split between single-family units (1-unit detached and attached) and multi-family units (5 units and greater). Together, single-family detached (45,523 units) and 20+ multi-family structures (39,636 units) comprise 57.3% of the City's total housing inventory.

**Table 5. Total Housing Units by Structure Type
City of Miami, Wynwood, Little Haiti**

Structure Type	City of Miami	Edison/ Little Haiti	Wynwood
SINGLE FAMILY	62,572	5,550	737
1-unit, detached	45,523	4,304	496
1-unit, attached	17,049	1,246	241
DUPLEX (2 units)	8,846	1,534	140
TRIPLEX & FOURPLEX	9,623	1,428	208
MULTI-FAMILY	65,919	2,828	419
5 to 9 units	13,865	915	192
10 to 19 units	12,418	634	133
20 or more	39,636	1,279	94
MOBILE HOME	1,462	277	-
BOAT, RV, VA, etc.	132	-	-
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	148,388	11,617	1,504

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

While the City of Miami increased from 144,550 to 148,388 housing units (3 percent.) In Wynwood there are currently 1,504 housing units of which 21 percent are owner occupied. Wynwood's housing stock is primarily comprised of single family (737) structures. Multi-family structures comprise 419 of the units with the majority in the 5-9 and 10-19 multi-family structure type.

Significantly, 87 percent of Wynwood's housing stock was built prior to 1970 compared to 81 percent in the City of Miami. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are 149 vacant units in Wynwood or 10 percent of all housing units.

While the City experienced an overall increase in housing units between 1990-2000, there were notable decreases in certain structure types. Of particular note was the loss of multi family units in structures containing 5-9 units and 10-19 units. During this period, the City lost 581 units (4 percent decrease) in 5-9 unit structures and 2,028 units (14 percent decrease) in its 10-19 unit structures. Overall, the City experienced a 5 percent increase in multi-family units, due primarily to market rate new construction in Downtown locations. The City's overall renter-occupied units decreased by 1,152 units between 1980-1990 and grew by only 206 units between 1990-2000.

Single-family home prices in the City of Miami have increased significantly in recent years, due in part to a saturation of the housing markets in the western suburbs and Miami Beach and lifestyle changes brought about by the revitalization of the City's Design and Performing Arts Districts, Brickell Village and Coconut Grove. Another contributing factor has been the recent influx of higher income immigrants from South America who favor the urban setting of Miami. According to the National Association of Realtors, the current median sale price for a single-family home in the Miami Metropolitan Area is \$236,900. The escalating price of single-family homes in the greater Miami area is also impacting sale prices in Miami's inner-city neighborhoods. While median sale prices remain below that of the Miami MSA, the high-end of the sale price range indicates some current single-family sales in these neighborhoods are approaching or exceeding the median sale price for the MSA.

C. Economic Profile

Wynwood is largely comprised of Retail and Wholesale businesses (see Table 6 below). According to the 2001 U.S. Census *County Business Patterns*, Retail and Wholesale businesses comprise nearly 48 percent of firms/establishments in U.S. Zip Code Area 33127 (West Wynwood) and 27 percent in Zip Code Area 33137 (East Wynwood). Retail businesses mainly include grocery/convenience (22) and women's clothing (12) establishments in 33127 and grocery/convenience (12) and furniture (11) establishments in 33137. Wholesale businesses mainly include footwear (26) and women/children clothing (23) establishments in 33127 and home furnishing (7) and furniture (6) establishments in 33137.

Health Care, Social Assistance and Other Services comprise 18 percent of the business establishments in 33127, while Professional, Scientific & Technical Services and "Other" Services comprise 21.6 and 9 percent, respectively, of the business establishments in 33137. The large percentage of Professional, Scientific & Technical Services in 33137 is attributed to the significant amount of law firms (54) within the Biscayne Boulevard Corridor. Other business concentrations in the two Zip Code areas include Real Estate (37 businesses in 33127/44 businesses in 33137) and Finance (16 businesses in 33127/26 in 33137).

Table 6. Top 4 Industries Within Wynwood By Zip Code

	33127	
	1998	2001
Industry Code Description	%	%
Total Industries	100	100
Wholesale Trade	27	25.2
Retail Trade	20.4	22.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	6.9	7
Other services (except public administration)	12.4	11.1
	33137	
	1998	2001
Industry Code Description	%	%
Total Industries	100	100
Wholesale Trade	12.7	12.8
Retail Trade	14.9	14.3
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	19.8	21.6
Other services (except public administration)	8.2	9

A comparison with surrounding Zip Code areas 33150, 33142 and 33147 (Liberty City) shows a general similarity in the concentration and mix of business types (see Table 7 below). Retail and Wholesale businesses are predominant in the surrounding areas with "Other" Services the next largest concentration. The percentage of Manufacturing establishments in 33127 (9 percent) is comparable to 33142 (12 percent) and 33147 (10 percent). This is due to the fact that Zip Code 33127 captures a significant portion of the Wynwood industrial area.

Table 7. Major Industries by Zip Code Area

Zip Codes/ Neighborhoods	33127 - West Wynwood	33137 East Wynwood
Industries Total	631	737
	<i>Firms/%</i>	<i>Firms/%</i>
Retail Trade	142/23%	105/14%
Wholesale	159/25%	94/13%
Other Services	70/11%	66/9%
Professional	15/2%	159/22%
Manufacturing	58/9%	23/3%
Health Care	44/7%	52/7%
Real Estate	37/6%	44/6%
Finance/Ins.	10/2%	26/4%

Source: U.S. Census 2001 County Business Patterns

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 3,543 or 48.9 percent of the "16 and over" population of the study area are in the labor force (see Table 8 below). This is a reduction from 4,455 or 62.1 percent of the population in 1990. The decrease in the 16 and over labor force can be attributed to two factors: 1) a substantial increase in the over 16 population not in the labor force and 2) a decline in the 30-39 years of age population group which normally comprises a significant percentage of the workforce. Reasons for the increase in the over 16 population not in the labor force typically include more 16-18 year old students staying in school and more single or married mothers staying at home. The study area's unemployment rate is 9.9 percent, down from 13.1 percent in 1990 but still much higher than the City (5.9) and the County (4.9).

Table 8. Employment Status for the Population 16 years and over (in thousands)

Employment status: Population 16 years & over	WYNWOOD/ LITTLE HAITI TOTAL				CITY OF MIAMI TOTAL				MIAMI-DADE COUNTY TOTAL			
	1990		2000		1990		2000		1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Population 16 years and over	7.2	100.0	7.2	100.0	285.0	100.0	292.8	100.0	1,758.4	100.0	1,520.0	100.0
In labor force	4.5	62.1	3.5	48.9	170.4	59.8	147.4	50.3	1,011.0	57.5	982.2	64.6
In Armed Forces	.0	0.2	-	-	.2	0.1	.2	0.1	1.5	0.1	5.4	0.4
Civilian:	4.4	61.9	3.5	48.9	170.2	59.7	147.2	50.3	1,009.5	57.4	976.8	64.3
Employed	3.5	48.8	2.8	39.0	151.4	53.1	130.0	44.4	921.2	52.4	901.9	59.3
Unemployed	.9	13.1	.7	9.9	18.8	6.6	17.2	5.9	88.2	8.7	75.0	4.9
Not in labor force	2.7	37.9	3.7	51.1	114.6	40.2	145.5	49.7	747.4	42.5	537.8	35.4

Of the 2,827 employed civilian population of 16 years and over, 2000 U.S. Census data for "Employment by Industry" (see Table 9 below) indicates that 21.4 percent of the study area's labor force are employed within Educational, Health and Social Services, up from 15.4 percent in 1990. This is followed by Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services (14 percent), Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services (11.5 percent) and Construction (9.1 percent). The most significant decreases in employment occurred in Manufacturing (down from 17.3 to 8.2 percent), Retail Trade (down from 15.9 to 8.9 percent) and Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services (down from 18.4 to 11.5 percent). An overall decrease in employment in Manufacturing and Retail Trade was also evident for the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County from 1990-2000.

Table 9. Employment by Industry

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY	WYNWOOD AREA TOTAL				CITY OF MIAMI TOTAL				MIAMI-DADE COUNTY TOTAL			
	1990		2000		1990		2000		1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Employed Civilian population 16 years and over	3,502	100.0	2,827	100.0	151,446	100.0	129,981	100.0	901,828	100.0	921,208	100.0
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	203	5.8	5	0.2	2,738	1.8	671	0.5	16,926	1.9	6,635	0.7
Construction	251	7.2	256	9.1	12,052	8.0	13,433	10.3	57,017	6.3	63,135	6.9
Manufacturing	605	17.3	233	8.2	21,765	14.4	9,596	7.4	102,372	11.4	65,041	7.1
Wholesale trade	87	2.5	82	2.9	8,672	5.7	7,103	5.5	57,029	6.3	55,398	6.0
Retail trade	558	15.9	251	8.9	28,119	18.6	14,269	11.0	157,772	17.5	113,333	12.3
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	270	7.7	247	8.7	8,776	5.8	8,007	6.2	65,892	7.3	69,072	7.5
Information	38	1.1	50	1.8	2,503	1.7	3,551	2.7	22,831	2.5	28,890	3.1
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing:	41	1.2	108	3.8	10,155	6.7	8,858	6.8	74,499	8.3	73,893	8.0
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services:	644	18.4	326	11.5	22,007	14.5	15,308	11.8	99,478	95.5	106,641	11.6

Educational, health and social services	539	15.4	604	21.4	19,252	12.7	19,450	15.0	140,979	15.6	165,357	18.0
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	87	2.5	397	14	2,333	1.5	15,659	12.0	14,723	1.6	84,129	9.1
Other services (except public administration)	123	3.5	172	6.1	8,475	5.6	9,739	7.5	56,121	6.2	51,737	5.6
Public administration	56	1.6	96	3.4	4,599	3.0	4,337	3.3	36,189	4.0	37,947	4.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

IV Existing Public Infrastructure and Transportation Improvements

A. Background

As previously noted, the study area is bounded by NE 36th Street on the north; NE 2nd Avenue on the east; NE 29th Street on the south; and, North Miami Avenue on the west, creating a rectangular public right-of-way network around the Buena Vista site. An initial field survey of the public right-of-ways was performed on April 23, 2004 with subsequent field surveys occurring on May 7th and 10th of 2004. The purpose of the field surveys was twofold: 1) to assess the existing physical condition of the public right-of-ways, and 2) to compare field notes with prior public infrastructure and transportation studies of the area.

B. Existing Public Infrastructure

A current assessment of the public infrastructure is critical in determining whether an area suffers from one or more indicators of blight, and whether the redevelopment of that area is appropriate and necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of the City.

Public infrastructure serves to unify dissimilar physical elements and land uses, provides coherence and rhythm to the streetscape, enhances pedestrian and vehicular circulation, establishes order, and helps serve the public health and safety of city residents. It is the city block that defines the streetscape or public realm. It is this public realm that we initially see as we move through the built environment. And, it is the quality of this public realm that provides the first and most vivid impression of an urban area.

The field survey assessed the public infrastructure along the four major right-of-ways that form the outer boundaries of the study area. The overall condition of the area can be described as deteriorated in accordance with the standards of Section 163.340(8), F.S. The field survey determined that the public infrastructure in the study area is generally insufficient, poorly designed or non-existent. Furthermore, the survey revealed that conditions of blight exist and that, absent intervention, these conditions will continue to erode the physical appearance of the area. The following is a summary of the key findings:

North Miami Avenue

North Miami Avenue, between NE 29th Street to NE 36th Street, forms the western boundary of the study area. The arterial roadway carries significant traffic to and from the Downtown area and I-195. Commercial uses line the western side of the Avenue backed by single family residential in the blocks extending west to NW 2nd Avenue. The east side of the avenue that borders the Buena Vista site is an unsightly stretch of public right-of-way and adjoining private land with overgrown vegetation that casts a significant blighted appearance to the entire city block.



Figure 4. Crumbling sidewalks along North Miami Avenue



Figure 5. Crumbling curbing and overgrown vegetation on North Miami Avenue



Figure 6. Crumbling sidewalks and unsanitary conditions on North Miami Avenue

The condition or absence of public infrastructure along North Miami Avenue creates unsanitary and unsafe conditions in the area. These conditions include: broken curbing, lack of sidewalks, poor landscaping, unavailable stormwater drainage, inadequate street lighting for nighttime pedestrian and resident activity.

NE 36th Street

NE 36th Street, between North Miami Avenue and NE 2nd Avenue forms the northern boundary of the study area. NE 36th Street is an arterial roadway that carries high traffic volumes between Biscayne Boulevard and I-195. The north side of the street is primarily comprised of commercial uses that mark the southern entrance into the Design District. The south side of the street is the main entrance into the former FEC Buena Vista Railway property. Similar to North Miami Avenue, the south side of NE 36th Street is an unsightly stretch of public right-of-way and adjoining private land that is highly incongruous with the physical improvements evident in the adjacent Design District.



Figure 7. Lack of sidewalks, overgrown vegetation, collapsed fencing on NE 36th Street



Figure 8. Lack of sidewalks and overgrown vegetation on NE 36th Street



Figure 9. Crumbling curbing and collapsed fencing at North Miami Avenue and NE 36th Street Intersection

The most blighted section of NE 36th Street extends east along the south side of the roadway from the intersection of North Miami Avenue. Along this stretch, missing or broken curbing, missing sidewalks, overgrown vegetation, inadequate street lighting, absence of landscaping and a lack of stormwater drainage creates unsanitary and unsafe conditions in the area.

NE 29th Street

NE 29th Street, between NE 2nd Avenue and North Miami Avenue, forms the southern boundary of the study area. NE 29th Street is an arterial roadway that carries heavy volumes of traffic between Biscayne Boulevard and points west of I-95. The street is primarily lined with a mix of commercial and retail uses. The physical condition of the north side of NE 29th Street is very similar to North Miami Avenue and NE 36th Street. This stretch of public right-of-way and adjoining private land is unsightly with little supporting public infrastructure.



Figure 10. Deteriorated sidewalks, overgrown vegetation and miscellaneous obstruction on NE 29th Street



Figure 11. Lack of sidewalks, overgrown vegetation, and unsanitary conditions on NE 29th Street



Figure 12. Lack of sidewalks, overgrown vegetation and collapsed fence on NE 29th Street

The physical condition or absence of public infrastructure creates unsanitary and unsafe conditions in the area. These conditions include: missing sidewalks and curbing, inadequate stormwater drainage, overgrown vegetation, lack of landscaping, and inadequate street lighting for nighttime pedestrian and resident activity.

C. Transportation

As previously noted, a field survey and concurrent analysis of previous transportation studies and reports of the area were performed for this study. The intent of this section of the study was to determine the adequacy of the street layouts, intersections and traffic circulation. The study area is principally served by four arterials: North Miami Avenue, NE 36th Street, NE 2nd Avenue and NE 29th Street. The study concluded that the street/roadway system in the area is faulty and inadequate and creates unsafe conditions for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Furthermore, the City's grid street system is interrupted by the FEC Buena Vista site. The grid network dead-ends at various intersection points on North Miami Avenue and NE 36th Street creating a barrier effect to surrounding neighborhoods. The following is a summary of the key findings:

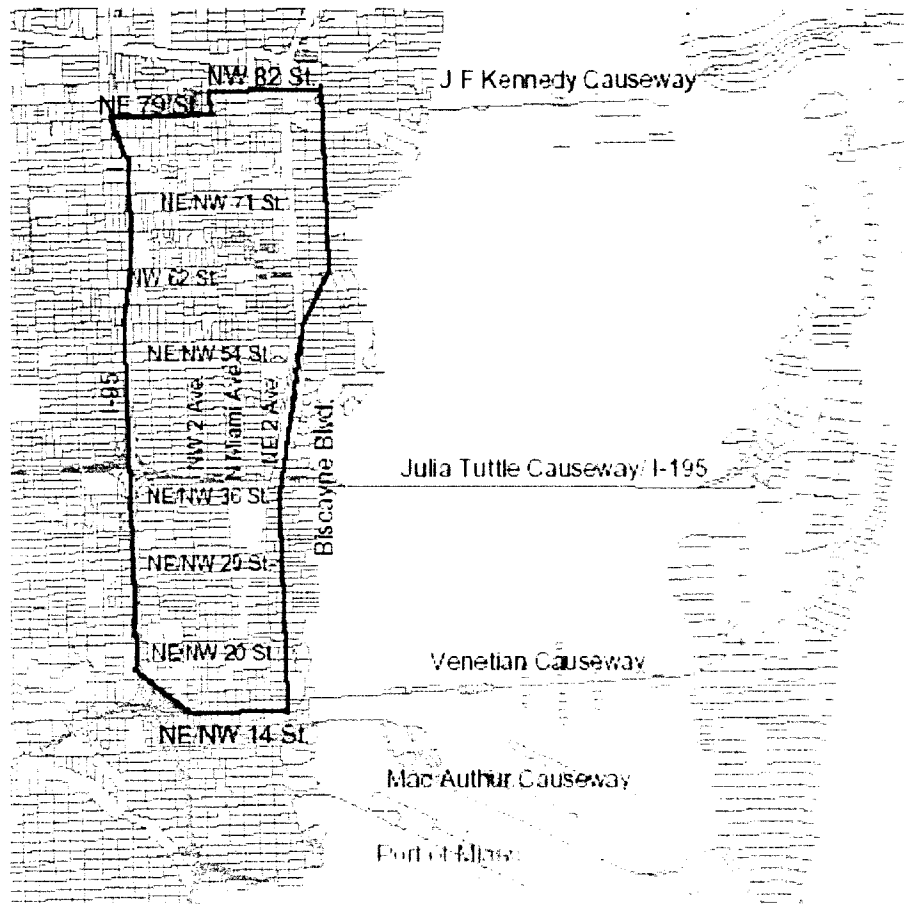


Figure 13. FEC Corridor Study Area Right-of-Way Map

North Miami Avenue

North Miami Avenue functions as a minor north and southbound arterial running along the western boundary of the study area. The avenue accommodates traffic at moderate levels and a lower level of travel mobility than principal arterials. It distributes travel to geographic areas smaller than those identified with the higher system. The land along the avenue consists of a mix of commercial and industrial uses.

The study focused on the intersection of North Miami Avenue and NE 29th Street. An intersection is defined as the area where two or more highways/streets join or cross, including the roadway and roadside facilities for traffic movements within the intersection. Each highway/street radiating from an intersection and forming part of it is referred to as an intersection leg. In general, the alignment of the intersection streets should permit users to perform readily the maneuvers necessary to pass through the intersection with minimal interference. Thus, the alignment should be as straight as practical and the intersecting legs should generally meet at right angles. The following figures show a trailer truck making a right turn from the westbound inside lane on NE 29th Street to the northbound inside lane on North Miami Avenue. The image clearly demonstrates that the turning radii at the intersection are insufficient for a large truck to perform right turning maneuvers at any corner of the intersection.

Figure 14. North Miami Avenue and NE 29 Street intersection

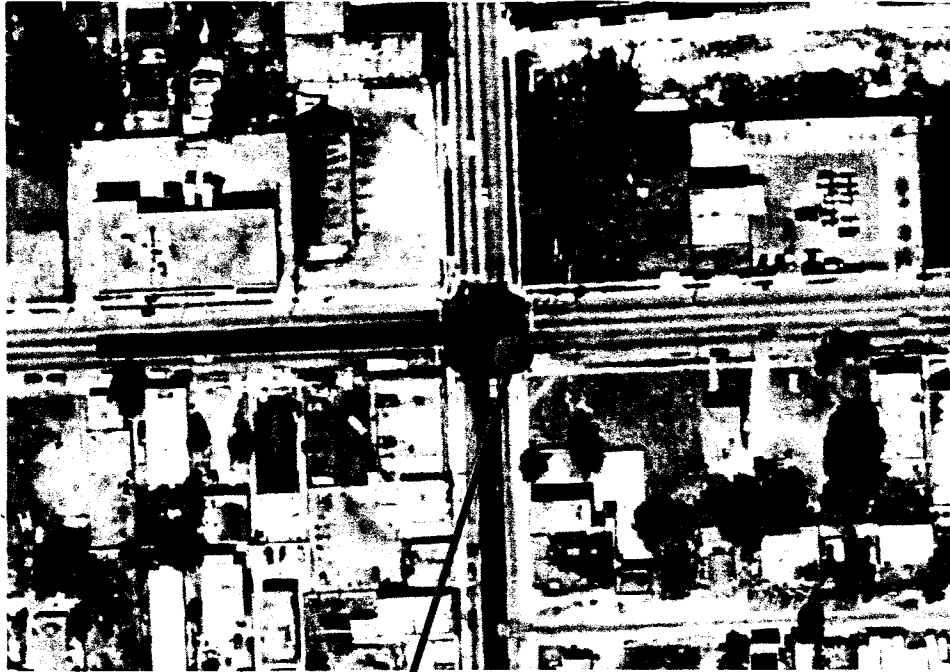


Figure 15. Right turn from the westbound inside lane on NE 29th Street to the northbound inside lane on North Miami Avenue

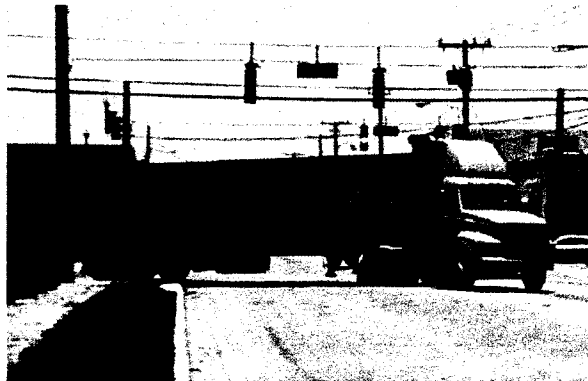


Figure 16. Insufficient turning radii on NE 29th Street and North Miami Avenue intersection

NE 29th Street and NE 2nd Avenue Intersection

NE 29th Street is a minor east and westbound arterial running along the south boundary of the study area. NE 29th Street crosses the FEC Railroad between North Miami Avenue and NE 2nd Avenue. The street section between I-95 and NE 2nd Avenue has four lanes reducing to two lanes east of NE 2nd Avenue. In addition to the lane reduction, the intersection has a large offset causing it to operate inefficiently. The centerline spacing between the east and westbound approaches is nearly 19m (62 feet). The photos and figures below show the roadway misalignment due to the offset intersection. As with the previous intersection, the turning radii at the intersection are not sufficient to accommodate turning maneuvers by large trucks.

Figure 17. NE 29th Street and NE 2nd Avenue Intersection



Figure 18. Off-set intersection at NE 29th Street and NE 2nd Avenue



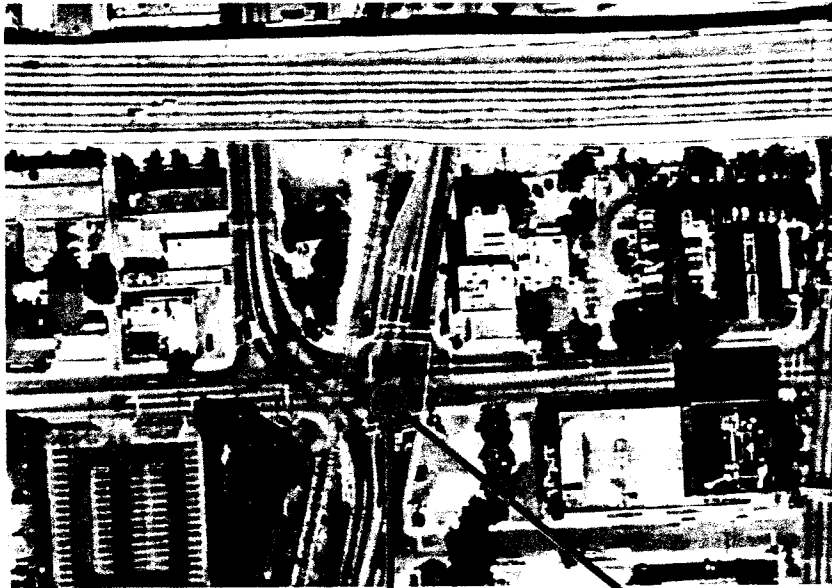
Figure 19. Off-set intersection at NE 29th Street and NE 2nd Avenue

NE 36th Street and NE 2nd Avenue Intersection

NE 36th Street carries most of the vehicle trips entering and leaving this urban area, as well as through traffic moving between I-95 and Miami's Central Business District (CBD). As such, NE 36th street is classified as an "urban principal arterial system." The FEC Railroad bisects the five-legged intersection at NE 36th Street and NE 2nd Avenue, creating a complex intersection geometry that is confusing to drivers. In addition, because the intersection is less than 500 feet away from the intersection of NE 36th Street and Biscayne Boulevard (US 1), it suffers from frequent traffic spillback.

Traffic safety and efficiency needs to be addressed at this intersection. Removing conflicting movements, realigning one or more of the intersection legs, combining traffic movements at subsidiary intersections or making one or more of the legs one-way. The re-design of the intersection will need to take into account ongoing and planned redevelopment activities between I-95 and the Biscayne Commercial Corridor.

Figure 20. NE 36th Street and NE 2nd Avenue Intersection



Figures 21 and 22. FEC Railroad bisecting intersection on NE 36th Street and NE 2nd Avenue

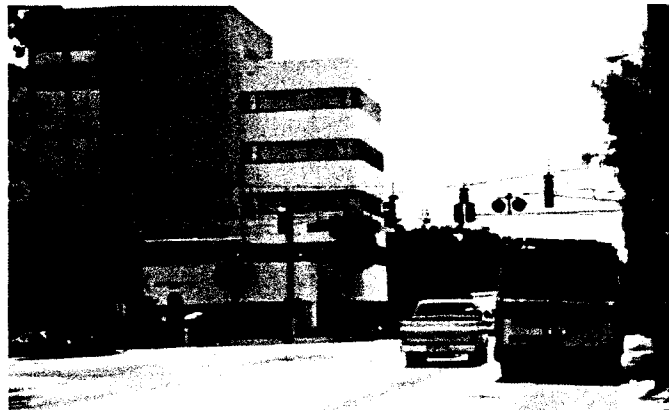


Figure 23. FEC Railroad bisects five-legged intersection on NE 36th Street and NE 2nd Avenue

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V Fiscal Impact Analysis

The former FEC Buena Vista Yard is situated in the heart of the City's FEC Corridor, an area that the City has designated for substantial private and public investment according to the 2002 FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan. The older, inner-city neighborhoods that surround the former FEC Buena Vista Yard are burdened with high levels of unemployment, poverty and stagnation. The current site is underutilized and has had a blighting influence on the surrounding neighborhoods. The former FEC-owned Buena Vista site was used exclusively as a staging facility for truck containers with minimal site improvements. In terms of other business venues, there is currently only one business structure, an auto body repair shop, located on NE 29th Street. Due to the stagnation of this vacant site, the project area has generated minimal tax revenues. Nor does the site provide important employment opportunities for City or nearby neighborhood residents. Currently, none of the property is accessible for public use.

Following the market instability and economic recession of the early 1990s, the Design District, and abutting locations in the vicinity of Wynwood's Fashion District and Little Haiti, have experienced an increase in investment interest, much of it stemming from a saturated Miami Beach real estate market that has impacted commercial real estate along the Biscayne Boulevard Corridor.

According to Miami-Dade County Property Assessor Records, there are 42 Residential Condo units in the adjacent areas of the project site. The assessed value for the 42 units was \$1,148,695, or an average of \$29,453 (upper bound- \$51,940, lower bound- \$17,146) per condo unit. In 2004, the assessed value increased to \$1,181,030, with an average of \$30,282 per condo unit (upper bound- \$51,940, lower bound- \$17,558).

According to Miami-Dade County Property Assessor Records, in 2002 there were 414 non-condo property units that consist of both commercial and single-family residential properties. Their assessed value averaged \$194,418 per property unit. Significantly, in 2003, the average increased to \$301,885 per unit. Of the 414 non-condo property units, 23.91% are vacant, which represents almost a third of the abutting properties to the FEC/Buena Vista site. Approximately 12% are residential-single family homes, and 8.21% designated for retail use. The impact of nearly a third of the land in and around the project site highlights problems faced by this particular area. The amount of vacant land indicates a relatively inefficient pattern of land use. Figure 8 illustrates the Property Use surrounding the FEC/Buena Vista property site.

According to the FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan, the neighborhoods of Wynwood and Little Haiti lost nearly 20,000 jobs between 1980-1995. The study area and surrounding neighborhoods are characterized by a general lack of retailers, particularly "big box" users and nationally recognized retail chains. The lack of national retailers is indicative of the general economic health of the area. These poor conditions are endemic both to the study area and larger FEC Corridor. While retail makes up 15 percent of the businesses uses in the FEC Corridor, it only accounts for 4.6% of sales, far less than half of the usage rate. This is based on the fact that most of the existing retailers are small businesses or "mom and pop" type establishments. The FEC Buena Vista Yard's combination of vacant and underutilized property, decaying infrastructure and lack of site improvements all contribute to the property's blighted image on the area. Yet, the FEC Buena Vista Yard remains the largest commercial site within the FEC Corridor with 56-acres of potentially developable land. To date, the property has not generated significant tax revenues and will remain non-productive until the "highest and best use" is realized and the necessary site improvements are made.

According to a recent pre-application to the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) prepared by the City of Miami, there is a need for significant public infrastructure improvements to the right-of-ways surrounding the FEC Buena Vista site. Public infrastructure improvements will be necessary along North Miami Avenue, NE 29th Street, NE 2nd Avenue and NE 36th Street. Required improvements include new street paving, new curbs, gutters and sidewalks, new water and sewer lines, new drainage systems, landscaping and irrigation. The estimated cost for these improvements is \$3.37 million.

The fiscal implications of community decline and redevelopment are problematic, especially as neighboring areas continue to experience similar patterns of deteriorated physical and economic conditions. Within the study area the unemployment rate remains at 15%, while the poverty level has remained virtually stagnant. As the property values decline or remain stagnated, investment will be ill-perceived as the lack of efficiency and obsolescence of infrastructure and maintenance becomes more increasingly noticeable. With the increase in trade opportunities, property improvements are essential in attracting businesses to locate to the area. Also, the retail industry itself has transformed from small specialty product retail to the wide retail opportunities presented by "big box" and value shopping retailers. Public improvements would be necessary along Miami Avenue, between NE 34th Street and NE 29th Street, NE 29th Street between North Miami Avenue and the railroad tracks located north of Federal highway. They would include new street paving, new curbs gutters and sidewalks, new water and sewer lines, new drainage systems, landscaping and irrigation.

VI Conclusions

The City of Miami has taken an active role in revitalizing its Florida East Coast (FEC) Railroad corridor north of the Central Business District (CBD). The City has intervened to stem the declining economic and physical conditions of the corridor through a series of planning implementation strategies intended to stimulate private investment activity. The former FEC Buena Vista Yard, a 56-acre parcel formerly owned by the Florida East Coast Railway, is viewed as a vital cog in this on-going revitalization effort due to its centralized location and the fact that it is the largest remaining tract of developable land within the boundaries of the City of Miami.

At the City's request, the Florida International University (FIU) Metropolitan Center has researched the necessary steps for the creation of a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) for the FEC Buena Vista area. The creation of a CRA is initiated by the governing body of a city or county adopting a resolution, supported by data and analysis, finding the existence of one or more slum or blighted areas or a shortage of housing affordable to low or moderate income persons within its jurisdiction. The resolution must also find that the "rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or a combination thereof" of the area is necessary.

The "Finding of Necessity" Study's methodology included field surveys of the former FEC Buena Vista Yard and supporting public infrastructure and transportation network, and a review of current planning and economic development studies and reports of the area. The study concluded that the former FEC Buena Vista Yard is an underutilized, physically blighted site that has cast a negative image on this section of the City for many years. In addition, the overall condition of the supporting public infrastructure and transportation network within the surrounding public right-of-ways can be described as deteriorated in accordance with the standards of Section 163.340(8), F.S. Specifically, field surveys determined that the public infrastructure and transportation network in the adjoining right-of-ways is generally decaying, insufficient, poorly designed or non-existent. The street/roadway system in the area is faulty and inadequate and creates unsafe conditions for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The study further concluded that the conditions of blight that exist, absent intervention, will continue to negatively impact the physical appearance of the area and depress property values.

As such, The FIU Metropolitan Center has formulated a "Draft Resolution"(Appendix A) to the City of Miami that states that based on the facts and evidence; the following conditions exist in and adjacent to the former FEC Buena Vista Yard site. Conditions are present in and adjacent to the former FEC Buena Vista Yard that are detrimental to the sound growth of the City and substantially impair or arrest the growth of the City, and present conditions and uses in the area exist that are detrimental to the public health, safety, morals and public welfare; (pages 22-32)

1. There is a predominance of defective or inadequate street layouts, transportation and parking facilities.
2. There are examples of unsanitary and unsafe conditions;

Addendum

This addendum to the "City of Miami Finding of Necessity for Redevelopment Study" for the Florida East Coast (FEC) Buena Vista Yard area serves as further explanation of said findings as determined by field surveys conducted as part of the overall site assessment. The original survey and site assessment concluded that the former FEC Buena Vista Yard site and peripheral right-of ways are underutilized and physically blighted areas of the city. The overall condition of the supporting public infrastructure and transportation network within the surrounding public right-of-ways can be described as blighted and deteriorated in accordance with the standards of Section 163.340(8), F.S. Specifically, field surveys determined that substantial unsanitary and unsafe conditions exist and that the public infrastructure and transportation network in the adjoining right-of-ways is generally decaying, insufficient, poorly designed or nonexistent. The street/roadway system in the area is faulty and inadequate and creates unsafe conditions for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The study further concluded that the conditions of blight that exist, absent intervention, would continue to erode the physical appearance of the area and depress property values.

The following explanations are hereby added to further characterize the extent of blight in the study area. It should be noted that the study determined the presence of two primary factors or conditions that support the findings that the FEC Buena Vista Yard and adjoining right-of-ways meet the standards of a "blighted area" as defined under 163.340(8) F.S. Those factors are: 1) unsanitary and unsafe conditions, and 2) the predominance of defective and inadequate street layouts and roadways. Public streets should be properly constructed in a right-of-way and include curbs and gutters, planting strips, sidewalks, and land necessary for proper grading. The sidewalks should provide safe, continuous, pleasant places to walk, and which are relatively free from automobile conflicts, noise, dust and other pollutants to assure usage and personal safety. The lack of sidewalks, planting strips and proper grading in the public right-of-ways surrounding the former FEC Buena Vista site creates a blighted and unsafe environment for pedestrians. These conditions are further exacerbated by loose topsoil where planting strips, sidewalks and grading would normally be located, resulting in excessive dust pollution that negatively effects pedestrian and vehicular traffic as well as abutting businesses and residences. The addendum serves to expound on factor #1 - unsanitary and unsafe conditions. Supporting documentation relative to factor #2 - the predominance of defective and inadequate street layouts and roadways is substantiated in the text and photos found in Chapter IV, Section C. and pages 27-32 of said study.

Unsanitary and Unsafe Conditions

The study determined that unsanitary and unsafe conditions are predominant in the area. Field surveys determined that the public infrastructure in the study area is virtually nonexistent and has been overtaken by blighted conditions including overgrown vegetation, crumbling sidewalks and curbing and significant amounts of trash and other debris. These factors result in a physical appearance that can clearly be described as "blighted."

North Miami Avenue

Unsanitary and unsafe conditions extend along the full section of the avenue that abuts the western boundary of the Buena Vista Yard study Area. Crumbling sidewalks and curbing, overgrown vegetation and trash are evident in 100 percent of the area. This creates a very unsafe environment for pedestrians and cast a negative physical image on the entire stretch of avenue. The general lack of improved public infrastructure coupled with the high volume and speed of

automobile and truck traffic on North Miami Avenue creates a dangerous environment for pedestrians.

NE 36th Street

Unsanitary and unsafe conditions extend for the entire length of the street, which abuts the northern boundary of the Buena Vista Yard study area. The vegetation is so overgrown that it nearly extends out into the traveled right of-way on the south side of the street. In addition, sidewalks are nonexistent for 100 percent of the street, thus creating very unsafe conditions for pedestrians. Trash and debris within the right-of-way along with crumbling fencing on the north side of the Buena Vista Yard site all contribute to very blighted conditions. The absence of a passable pedestrian right-of-way creates a very dangerous environment given the high volume and speed of automobile and truck traffic along NE 36th Street.

NE 29th Street

Unsanitary and unsafe conditions are evident along most of the street, which abuts the southern boundary of the FEC Buena Vista yard site. Sidewalks are nonexistent along approximately 75 percent of the street. Overgrown vegetation, trash and debris are evident along approximately 90 percent of the right-of-way. The lack of sidewalks coupled with the high volume and speed of automobile and truck traffic along NE 29th Street creates a very dangerous environment for pedestrians who use this stretch of roadway to access businesses on both NE 29th Street and NE 2nd Avenue. The general isolation and decadence of the area has also resulted in a discernible level of vagrancy in the area and the potential for crime.

Soil and Ground Water Contamination

The addendum includes as further evidence of finding regarding "unsanitary and unsafe conditions" reference to a document concluded subsequent to said study regarding soil and ground water contamination on the FEC Buena Vista Yard site. The study, "Reasonable Assurance Document Stormwater Drainage Wells: Former FEC Buena Vista Railroad Yard Midtown, Miami," prepared by Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. and dated July 7, 2004 states "The historical activities associated with the site have resulted in localized soil and ground water impacts. Rehabilitation of the site is being performed under the State and Federal Brownfield Programs. The site has been designated as Brownfield Site Number BF 139801002, within the general Brownfield Area BF 139801000."

APPENDIX A: DRAFT RESOLUTION

DRAFT RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION OF NECESSITY OF THE CITY OF MIAMI, FLORIDA, PROMULGATED PURSUANT TO §163.355, FLORIDA STATUTES, IN ORDER TO BEGIN THE FORMAL PROCESS OF CREATING A COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY TO FUNCTION WITHIN THE CITY OF MIAMI; APPROVING A SLUM AND BLIGHT STUDY; DEFINING THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA; DETERMINING THAT THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA SUFFERS FROM TWO OR MORE INDICATORS OF BLIGHT; DETERMINING THAT THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA IS APPROPRIATE AND CRITICALLY NECESSARY IN THE INTEREST OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, MORALS, AND WELFARE OF THE RESIDENTS OF THE CITY; MAKING CERTAIN OTHER REQUIRED FINDINGS AND DETERMINATIONS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Whereas, in 2001 the City of Miami committed to the redevelopment of the FEC Corridor by funding a "FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan" to be prepared by Florida International University's Metropolitan Center;

Whereas, in 2002 the City of Miami approved the FEC Corridor Strategic Redevelopment Plan that included a redevelopment concept for a Buena Vista Mixed-Use District at the former FEC Railway Buena Vista Yard;

Whereas, in 2004 the City of Miami amended the text of its Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan to designate the Buena Vista Regional Activity Center.

Whereas, in 2004 the City of Miami approved an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to add a new Sub-District, SD-27.2, entitled Buena Vista Yard West, a mixed-use district;

Whereas, in 2004 the City of Miami approved the Buena Vista Yard West Special District a Community Development District (CDD);

Whereas, the City of Miami approved a "Finding of Necessity for Redevelopment Study" pursuant of Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statute to determine whether the former FEC Buena Vista Yard and adjacent area displays sufficient indications of blight, as required by the statutes, to warrant designation of the area as a community redevelopment area;

Whereas, blight constitutes a serious menace injurious to the public health, safety, morals and welfare of the City of Miami and County of Miami-Dade, imposing onerous burdens which lessen the tax base and reduce tax revenues, substantially impairing or arresting sound growth, public infrastructure, aggravating traffic problems and substantially hampering the elimination of traffic hazards and the improvement of traffic facilities, and increasing the costs of providing public services to blighted areas;

Whereas, while the City of Miami has determined that the former FEC Buena Vista yard and adjacent area demonstrates conditions of blight, the area can be rehabilitated and redeveloped through

appropriate public action as authorized under the Florida statutes, preserving and enhancing the tax base of all taxing authorities;

Whereas, Miami-Dade County is a Home Charter County and is authorized under Florida law to delegate such powers provided in Part III of Section 163 to the governing bodies of municipalities within the County;

Whereas, Miami-Dade County's Administrative Code provides procedures for creating community redevelopment agencies;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, as follows:

SECTION ONE. Findings. The City Commission hereby finds:

- (a) Based upon the facts and evidence presented to and considered by the City Commission, the following conditions exist in the area in and adjacent to the former FEC Buena Vista Yard. Conditions are present in and adjacent to the former FEC Buena Vista Yard that are detrimental to the sound growth of the City and substantially impair or arrest the growth of the City, and present conditions and uses in the area that are detrimental to the public health, safety, morals and public welfare:
 - 1. There is a predominance of defective or inadequate street layouts, transportation and parking facilities;
 - 2. There are examples of unsanitary and unsafe conditions;
- (b) The notices required by section 163.346, Florida Statutes, have been timely published or mailed in accordance with said statutes.
- (c) Action must be taken immediately to prevent further blight and deterioration and to protect and enhance public expenditures made in the area.
- (d) The preservation or enhancement of the tax base from which a taxing authority realizes tax revenues is essential to its existence and financial health; that the preservation and enhancement of such tax base is implicit in the purposes for which a taxing authority is established; that tax increment financing is an effective method of achieving such preservation and enhancement in areas in which such tax base is declining or stagnating; that community redevelopment in such areas, when complete, will enhance such tax base and provide increased tax revenues to all affected taxing authorities, increasing their ability to accomplish their other respective purposes; and that the preservation and enhancement of the tax base in such areas through tax increment financing and the levying of taxes by such taxing authorities therefore and the appropriation of funds to a redevelopment trust fund bears a substantial relation to the purposes of such taxing authorities and is for their respective purposes and concerns.

SECTION TWO: Finding of Necessity. The City Commission, based upon the evidence presented to it in the public record, does hereby find that a "blighted area," as defined in the Florida Statutes, exists in

the former FEC Buena Vista Yard area that is deteriorating and economically distressed due to the predominance of defective and inadequate street layout, unsanitary and unsafe conditions and deterioration of site and other improvements including supporting public infrastructure, and does further find that the rehabilitation and redevelopment of such area described is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals or welfare of the residents of the City of Miami, Florida and that such area constitutes a "community redevelopment area" as defined by Florida Statutes.

SECTION THREE: County Approval. The City hereby requests that the Board of County Commissioners delegate the exercise of all powers and responsibilities conferred upon Miami-Dade County by §163.410, Florida Statutes to the City of Miami for the purpose of establishing a Community Redevelopment Agency and the preparation of a Redevelopment Plan to be submitted to the County for approval.

SECTION FOUR: Severability. If any section or portion of a section of this resolution proves to be invalid, unlawful, or unconstitutional, it shall not be held to invalidate or impair the validity, force, or effect of any other section or part of this resolution.

SECTION FIVE: Effective Date. This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage and adoption.

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